



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR


STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 23, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Approval of Criteria for the Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation Grant

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) for four-year-old children at risk of school failure has been operating in Michigan school districts and private agencies since 1985-86. In fiscal year (FY) 2011-2012, administration of GSRP moved to intermediate school districts. From FY 1994 through FY 1997, a three-year grant to the HighScope Educational Research Foundation was awarded after a competitive process to implement an evaluation study of students in the state-funded pre-kindergarten program. Subsequently, the HighScope Educational Research Foundation has been successful in competing for five-year grants to continue the evaluation study. Results of the evaluation have been publicized widely, indicating that the program is successful in helping at-risk children be prepared for success when they reach school. The most recent report to the State Board of Education in June 2012 shared findings about children's grade advancement and graduation from high school. The GSRP evaluation has been recognized nationally for its research design and longitudinal effects. HighScope also collaborated with other researchers nationally to include GSRP in multi-state evaluations of state prekindergarten programs. In addition, the evaluation has aided Department staff in planning and implementing program improvements.

For FY 2013, \$300,000 is available in the State School Aid Act to continue the evaluation of the Great Start Readiness Program. The Office of Great Start/Early Childhood Education and Family Services proposes to manage a competitive process for an independent outside evaluator for up to five years, pending continued appropriations and appropriate progress of the grantee.

The attached "Criteria for the Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation Grant" provides background information and the proposed criteria for the next five years of the longitudinal study.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Criteria for the Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation Grant as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated July 23, 2012.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JOHN C. AUSTIN – PRESIDENT • CASANDRA E. ULBRICH – VICE PRESIDENT
NANCY DANHOF – SECRETARY • MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – TREASURER
RICHARD ZEILE – NASBE DELEGATE • KATHLEEN N. STRAUS
DANIEL VARNER • EILEEN LAPPIN WEISER

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Criteria for Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation Grant

The State Board of Education has adopted as its goal "Continue developing an effective and equitable performance-based system that achieves academic growth and successful outcomes for all students."

To the extent possible, all grant criteria and grant awards will serve to further attain the above goal.

PRIORITIES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS THAT THESE CRITERIA SUPPORT

The Michigan State Board of Education has embraced four reform priorities, including "Early Childhood Education and Care." Under this topic, an important strategy is to "Increase access to high quality early learning and development programs for those children with the highest needs prior to kindergarten entry." The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) grants enable eligible recipients to establish or expand high quality preschool programs designed to improve the readiness and subsequent achievement of children at risk of school failure. The programming provided through the GSRP grants has a considerable impact on future performance and success of the children who are served; in particular, ensuring early childhood literacy and integrating communities and schools. Moreover, young children with risk factors in their lives associated with school failure may enter kindergarten already exhibiting an achievement gap. The GSRP longitudinal evaluation has demonstrated that the state's prekindergarten program impacts children's success as they enter school and throughout their school careers.

PURPOSE / BACKGROUND OF GRANT

x Competitive ☐ Formula ☐ New ☐ Continuation

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) grants enable eligible recipients to establish or expand high quality preschool programs designed to improve the readiness and subsequent achievement of children at risk of school failure. The programming provided through the GSRP grants has a considerable impact on future performance and success of the children who are served; in particular, ensuring early childhood literacy and integrating communities and schools. Evaluation of the Great Start Readiness Program by an independent agency assures that locally and statewide, children's preschool programs are assessed for effective implementation that impacts the success of the children as they enter school and for their future. The evaluation grant provides information that enables Department staff monitors and local supervisors to assure that the GSRP sites are utilizing accurate information to design and implement the highest quality programs that can be most effective for the children served.

CRITERIA

Date criteria were last approved May 8, 2007

x Defined in Statute ☐ Defined in Department's Approved Grant Application to the Funder x Proposed by Staff

The main criteria upon which subgrantees will be selected are the following:

The successful applicant will have experience with longitudinal evaluations of preschool programs and with program improvement activities. The successful applicant will:

- Continue the longitudinal evaluation of cohorts of program and comparison group children at selected sites around the state, following their continued progress as they exit school, utilizing the Michigan Student Data System and Longitudinal Data System, as possible;*
- Continue the longitudinal evaluation of cohorts of urban and rural program children as they enter kindergarten, determining the effectiveness of GSRP in different settings;*
- Collect data on risk status information of all children participating in the program;**
- Collect and report data on preschool program quality;**
- Provide professional development for preschool program quality assessment personnel and early childhood specialists;**
- Develop recommendations on additional child assessment and program assessment collection protocols and tools, including instrumentation for child outcomes collection activities;** and
- Support state and local program improvement activities.**

* Criteria Defined in Statute

**Criteria Defined by Staff

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/TARGET POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY GRANT

An eligible applicant for the GSRP Evaluation Grant is any agency or organization that can demonstrate previous experience in the design and utilization of program and process evaluation, which incorporates stakeholders and both qualitative and quantitative methods. Priority will be given to applicants who can demonstrate previous experience in the evaluation of programs for preschool-aged youngsters and their families, as well as previous experience in the evaluation of school-age children. In addition, the successful applicant must demonstrate an understanding of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs and appropriate assessment of young children, and the capacity to support this activity. To minimize travel costs, preference will be given to Michigan-based research organizations and institutions. All GSRP grantees will be included in the evaluation efforts, including data collection on the entire cohort of children funded through the program each year.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE

\$300,000 annually

STATUTE

The State School Aid Act, Section 32d(3), PA 201 of 2012, includes \$300,000 for the evaluation in 2012-2013. The grant will be renewable for four additional years, pending continued funding and adequate progress, for a total of five years.

OFFICE ADMINISTERING GRANT/PROGRAM CONTACT

Office of Great Start/Early Childhood Education and Family Services

Director:	Lindy Buch, Ph.D.	(517) 241-3592
Program Contacts:	Richard Lower, M.A., Supervisor	(517) 373-8512